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AUTHOR Green, Susan
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ABSTRACT

In 1993-94, the Board of Education of the City of New York distributed more than $1 million to augment existing multicultural initiatives in professional or curriculum development. Districts and superintendencies in the city also designed a 3-year program to facilitate the planning and scope of these initiatives. The 1995-96 school year was the final year of this 3-year cycle. In early 1996, evaluators from the Board's Division of Assessment and Accountability (DAA) used survey techniques to conduct a needs assessment and to examine program implementation. The DAA received 27 responses from program coordinators to the needs assessment (60% response rate) and 45 responses (51% response rate) to the implementation survey. Overall, 534 schools and 280,275 students were involved in the Multicultural Initiative. The studies found that the Multicultural Initiative was rated highly by survey respondents, and that the goals of offering parents, teachers, students, paraprofessionals, and administrators a diversified educational program have been satisfactorily achieved. Recommendations are made to improve the distribution of program funds and to consider additional training at the end of the 3-year cycle. (Contains two tables.) (SLD)

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ED 406 489

Assessment/Accountability Report

Multicultural Education Program Evaluation 1995-96

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1993-94, the Board of Education of the City of New York distributed in excess of $1 million to augment existing multicultural initiatives in professional or curriculum development. In addition, districts and superintendencies designed a three-year program in order to facilitate planning and scope of these initiatives. Chancellor's Special Circular 27, 1993-94 required all districts and superintendencies receiving multicultural initiative grant funds to focus on professional and curriculum development activities and to propose and assess outcome objectives for all funded activities. The 1995-96 school year marks the final year of this three-year cycle.

During the spring of 1996, evaluators from the Division of Assessment and Accountability (DAA) used survey research techniques to conduct a needs assessment and to examine program implementation. This year's report focuses on the information gathered in these two areas. DAA requested that multicultural program coordinators in all the districts and high school superintendencies define what the district priorities were in both the short and the long term, and complete an implementation survey which asked for assessments of the extent to which district goals were implemented.

DAA found that the Multicultural Initiative was rated highly by survey respondents. The goal of offering an extensive number of parents, teachers, students, paraprofessionals, and administrators a diversified educational program has been satisfactorily achieved, based on the statements of the multicultural coordinators.

Based on these findings, DAA recommends that the program administrators:

- consider the process whereby funds are distributed to insure that they are distributed in a timely fashion so that program goals can be accomplished; and
- consider continuing to offer training to those involved with the program's implementation to assure the program's success after the three-year cycle of the program is completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Comments or information requests regarding this report can be directed to:

Dr. Lori Mei
Division of Assessment and Accountability
Office of Systemwide Evaluation and Accountability
Board of Education of the City of New York
110 Livingston Street, Room 740
Brooklyn, New York 11201

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Beginning in the 1993-94 school year, the Chancellor's Special Circular No. 27 directed that community school districts (CSDs) and high school superintendencies, as well as District 75 (Citywide) submit multicultural education plans designed "to augment existing programs and/or create new outcome-based multicultural initiatives over a three- year period." The objectives and outcomes for each year were to build on the previous year's accomplishments. In 1994-95 the districts and high school superintendencies were required to submit an update on new goals, with the majority of the respondents stating that the goals had been substantially attained. The 1995-96 school year marks the final year of this cycle.

CSDs, high school superintendencies, and the Citywide program developed and submitted action plans to create professional and curriculum development multicultural initiatives to the Chancellor's Multicultural Advisory Board and the Office of Multicultural Education. Initiative grants were awarded to all who complied with the eligibility criteria. Grant monies were used to purchase program-related books, instructional and library materials; hire and train instructional personnel; hire consultants; pay for per-session teachers; contract with non-profit organizations (like universities, libraries, and cultural institutions); develop and disseminate curriculum; and initiate

parent involvement activities. A project coordinator was designated by each district, high school superintendency, and Citywide program to direct the overall program implementation.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The 1995-96 evaluation of the Multicultural Education Program by the Division of Assessment and Accountability's Office of Systemwide Evaluation and Accountability focused on the accomplishments of all three program years, with a particular emphasis on the extent to which the program goals (as stated in the 1995-96 proposal) had been implemented. To obtain these data, DAA requested information from all the participating multicultural coordinators (needs assessment), about district priorities in both the short and long-term (with short-term defined as "during the next school year," and long-term defined as "during the next three school years"); and about the extent to which the district's multicultural goals (as stated in the 1995-96 proposal) were implemented (program implementation survey). DAA mailed 45 needs assessments of which 27 were returned completed, for a response rate of 60 percent; and 45 implementation surveys of which 23 were returned completed, for a response rate of 51 percent. These response rates are considered good for mailed surveys.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Chapter I offers a description of the program's background and the evaluation methodology. Survey findings are presented in Chapter II. Chapter III offers conclusions and recommendations.

II. FINDINGS

The findings presented here are based on survey responses from multicultural program coordinators: 27 coordinators responded to the needs assessment survey, and 23 coordinators responded to the implementation survey.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION SERVED

Multicultural coordinators described the characteristics of the program's participants. Overall, they reported that 534 schools and 280,275 students were involved in the program, with 12,009 teachers from 22 districts and high school superintendencies participating. The 15,577 parents involved came from 20 districts and high school superintendencies; while the 1,724 paraprofessionals and 690 responding supervisors served by the program came from 21 districts and high school superintendencies.

THIRD-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

Districts chose the area or strand on which they intended to focus their efforts. Respondents were asked in the implementation survey which strand their district focused on during the 1995-96 program year. Of those responding (N=23), 57 percent said they were focusing on the professional development strand, 13 percent said that they were involved in the curriculum development strand, and 30 percent said that their district was focusing on both strands simultaneously.

Respondents also stated which three goals their district selected in their 1995-96 proposal. The goals mentioned were

comprehensive and varied, but some of the goals that appeared to be universal included: developing and implementing of a professional development plan; developing a curriculum guide for multicultural education; developing human relations skills; fostering understanding between the diverse groups represented in the New York City public schools; and disseminating multicultural information through the turn-key training process.

Multicultural coordinators rated goal implementation high ($\underline{M}$=4.5).* In addition, over four-fifths of responses indicated that multicultural coordinators would have liked more timely access to funds, while a majority (52 percent) of responses suggested that multicultural coordinators would have liked additional training.** Thirty-three percent said that more technical assistance would have been helpful. About one-fifth (19 percent) of the responses cited a redefinition of goals as the solution to goal implementation problems. Other solutions included: additional money for staff development and for additional materials, more time to do the training, more assistance from the Office of Multicultural Education in the form of hiring additional personnel at central to work with the multicultural coordinators, and a stronger evaluation/assessment program component to determine the program's impact on the student participants.

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*All responses were made on 5-point Likert scale where higher numbers represent more complete implementation.

**Multiple responses were probable to all survey questions.

Many different activities were cited as means of accomplishing the multicultural goals of the districts, high school superintendencies, and the Citywide program throughout the 1995-96 school year. Some of the activities mentioned most frequently included: workshops and staff development activities for a variety of people (including parents, teachers, and administrators) (N=13); development and dissemination of new multicultural curriculum (N=7); ordering and using new materials (N=5); and the use of community-based organizations (CBOs) and other specialists (N=5).

A variety of CBOs were noted by the multicultural coordinators for their involvement in the program. Among the CBOs offering staff development, tutoring, family counseling, and consultation services were: Caribbean Cultural Center; Caribbean American Family Service; Fordham University, St. John's University, Columbia University Teachers College, Brooklyn College, Medgar Evers College, Queens College, Kingsborough Community College, and Lehman College; Queens Museum of the Arts and the Museum of the City of New York; Children's Art Carnival, Harlem School of the Arts, New York State Alliance for Arts Education; and Carter G. Woodson Literacy program and Teachers College Cross-Cultural Literacy program.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Coordinators were asked if they had any additional comments or suggestions to make about the program's strengths and the areas needing future attention. Some of the suggestions and

comments included: the feedback from the schools has been extremely positive; continue and expand the staff development component utilizing multicultural specialists; mandate the attendance of multicultural coordinators at monthly or yearly conferences so that the district level administrators have a clear understanding about the program's importance; continue the high quality meetings for the coordinators that were held this year; increase funding to a level sufficient to carry out the goals as far as training and the publication of materials are concerned; and continue support that the Office of Multicultural Education has offered.

FUTURE NEEDS

In terms of both short-term and long-term needs, multicultural coordinators deemed multicultural literature for students as most essential. As shown in Table 1, materials for hands-on activities, additional information on curriculum areas, professional development, the sharing of information, and establishing collaboration between parents and the community were also the most frequently cited long-term and short-term responses.

The multicultural coordinators also indicated the long-term and short-term needs with which the Office of Multicultural Education (OME) at the Central Board of Education could assist them. As shown in Table 2, in the area of professional development, between three-and-four-fifths of respondents said that they could use the central office's help in identifying

Table 1

Summary of Essential Short-Term and Long-Term Needs of Multicultural Coordinators

Needs	Short-Term Needs % Rating Essential	Long-Term Needs % Rating Essential
Resources and Materials		
Multicultural Literature for Students	74	83
Materials For Hands-on Activities	74	74
Professional Literature	63	69
Presentations	61	52
Audio-Visual Materials	48	58
Software	43	48
Information on Topics		
Curriculum Areas	85	80
Professional Development	71	68
Conflict Resolution	70	68
Intergroup Relations	68	67
Anti-discrimination	63	56
Research on Multicultural Education	61	58
Ethnic/Cultural Groups	60	69
Multiple Intelligence	57	50
Cooperative Learning	48	42
Restructuring	35	27

(continued)

Table 1
(continued)

Summary of Essential Short-Term and Long-Term Needs of Multicultural Coordinators

Needs	Short-Term Needs % Rating Essential	Long-Term Needs % Rating Essential
Technical Assistance		
Information Sharing	63	63
Establishing Collaboration With Parents & Community	55	58
Assistance in Curriculum	54	48
Assistance in Developing Parent Programs	50	58
Assistance in Professional Development	50	50
Classroom Visits/ Demonstrations	27	33
Assistance in Setting Up Multicultural Events	22	26

Note. Short-term needs are defined as needs during the next year; long-term needs are defined as needs during the next three years.

- Overall, most respondents perceived the same long- and short-term needs with respect to resources and materials, information on topics, and technical assistance as essential.

- Those needs which were cited as the least essential in both the long- and short-term were software (in the area of resources and materials), restructuring (in the area of information on topics), and classroom visits and demonstrations (in the area of technical assistance).

Table 2

Short-Term And Long-Term Needs Assessments For The Central Office Of Multicultural Education

(N=27)

	Short-Term Needs		Long-Term Needs	
Needs	N	%	N	%
Materials				
Central Office Develop Materials For Use	18	67	19	70
Central Office Provide You With Listings of Resources Developed By Other Sources	20	74	18	67
Central Office Work With You To Develop Materials	11	41	18	67
Professional Development				
Central Office Provide Professional Development In Your District	15	56	10	37
Central Office Identify Outside People/Agencies To Provide Professional Development	22	81	17	63
Central Office Work With You To Design Professional Development	15	56	18	67

Note. Short-term needs are defined as needs during the next year; long-term needs are defined as needs during the next three years.

- In the area of materials, respondents perceived all three of the long-term needs cited as being equally essential.
- In the area of professional development, respondents believed that the least essential long-term need was central actually providing the development activities.

outside people and/or agencies that could assist with professional development (81 percent cited this as a short-term need, and 63 percent cited it as a long-term need). In the area of materials, over two-thirds of the respondents cited their need for the central office's help in compiling listings of resources developed outside OME (74 percent saw this as a short-term need and 67 percent saw this as a long-term need). Finally, over two-thirds of respondents (67 percent short-term, 70 percent long-term) hoped for materials developed by the central office.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall impact of the Multicultural Initiative was rated highly by survey respondents. The goal of offering an extensive number of parents, teachers, students, paraprofessionals, and administrators a diversified educational program seems to have been satisfactorily achieved, based on the statements of the multicultural coordinators. The respondents stated that the goals their districts selected for 1995-96 were comprehensive and varied, and goal implementation was rated high. ($\underline{M}$=4.5) In addition, a variety of CBOs were noted by the multicultural coordinators for their involvement in the program.

Based on these findings, DAA recommends that the program administrators:

- consider the process whereby funds are distributed to insure they are distributed in a timely fashion so that program goals can be accomplished; and
- consider continuing to offer training to those involved with the program's implementation to assure the program's success after the three-year cycle of the program is completed.